



Differentiate By Design

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Xcel Brands, Inc. Announces Christina Caruso as Creative Director for the Judith Ripka Brands

NEW YORK, Dec. 07, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Xcel Brands, Inc. (NASDAQ:XELB) is pleased to announce Christina Caruso as Creative Director for the Judith Ripka brands.

With 15 years of experience in fashion accessory and jewelry design, Caruso joins the team to collaborate with Chief Designer, Judith Ripka on all Judith Ripka labels and further extensions of the brand. Additionally, Caruso will appear frequently on QVC as a presenter of the brand's exclusive collection for the television network. Ripka and Caruso will work together to evolve the brand's designs while continuing to reflect the latest trends and tastes of modern women.

Robert W. D'Loren, Xcel's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer stated, "Christina will be a huge asset for both our QVC business and the future brand projects. Her natural design sensibility and taste level echoes what Judith has created over her 38-year history in jewelry design. I am confident Christina will excite those loyal to the brand while attracting new customers through her extensive knowledge and experience in jewelry and accessory design."

Judith Ripka, Chief Designer of Judith Ripka products, commented, "Christina's entrepreneurial background resonated with me and the way in which I started my business. Her past work and her passion for jewelry design made her the perfect fit for this position. I'm so thrilled that Christina is joining the team and I'm truly excited to see the future of the brand with her creative direction."

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at

<http://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/6d8dec52-0db5-4316-8798-9bd6ebd71143>

Newly appointed Creative Director, Christina Caruso commented, "Judith Ripka has inspired me as an entrepreneur from very early in my career. She is a legend in jewelry design, whose work I have admired for so long. To work alongside her and the amazing Judith Ripka team is such an honor."

Xcel Brands, Inc. (NASDAQ:XELB) is a brand management and media company engaged in the design, production, licensing, marketing and direct-to-consumer sales of branded apparel, footwear, accessories, jewelry, home goods, and other consumer products, and the acquisition of dynamic consumer lifestyle brands. Xcel was founded by Robert W. D'Loren in 2011 with a vision to reimagine shopping, entertainment and social as one. Xcel owns and manages the Isaac Mizrahi, Judith Ripka, H Halston, C. Wonder and Highline Collective brands, pioneering an omnichannel sales strategy which includes the promotion and sale of products under its brands through direct-response television, internet, brick and mortar retail, and e-commerce channels. Headquartered in New York City, Xcel Brands is led by an executive team with significant production, merchandising, design, marketing, retailing, and licensing experience, and a proven track record of success in elevating branded consumer products companies. With a team of over 100 professionals focused on design, production, and digital marketing, Xcel maintains control of product quality and promotion across all of its product categories and distribution channels. Xcel differentiates by design. www.xcelbrands.com

Judith Ripka started her acclaimed career in 1977 and since its inception her global brand has become known for its impeccable quality and distinctive and refined designs. Both the 18k Gold collection and a Sterling Silver collection are in fine jewelry stores worldwide. Ms. Ripka was a pioneer in interactive TV, debuting a collection on QVC in 1996 and more recently on The Shopping Channel in 2014. Ms. Ripka serves as the Chief Designer for Judith Ripka brands, overseeing design and design direction. Among her many milestones, Ms. Ripka was chosen as one of "The Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World" and received the DeBeer's Award for Outstanding Jewelry Design.

Christina Caruso is the Creative Director and QVC on air guest for Judith Ripka. With 15 years of experience in fashion accessories and jewelry design, she has collaborated with Judith Ripka on invigorating the brand with the latest trends suited for a modern woman. Previously, Christina consulted as Design Director for major brands including Isaac Mizrahi Collection and Banana Republic's jewelry and sunglasses division. Christina's passion for the industry motivated her to teach Accessories Design to students at two renowned fashion universities in New York City: Fashion Institute of Technology and Parsons School of Design. She gained additional acclaim as a TV personality while she was an accessory design contestant on Lifetime's *Project Accessory* in 2011. Christina embodies Judith Ripka's entrepreneurial

background and love for jewelry design, having founded her own namesake fashion jewelry and accessory line which was featured on Sarah Jessica Parker in *Sex and the City*.

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